

NOTES ON PADDY CULTIVATION CEREMONIES IN THE RATNAPURA DISTRICT (NAWADUN AND KURUWITI KORALE).

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THE following notes are intended merely to supplement the information already available¹ on the subject of Paddy Cultivation Ceremonies; they are based on observations and inquiries made at various places within ten miles of Ratnapura. The customs are slowly dying out, and are often neglected or forgotten by the younger generation. In one place one part, in another other parts, of the ceremonial procedure may be observed.

The *kamat-hella* or threshing-floor song forms the main feature of this Paper; it is of much interest, as giving full details of the proper preparation of the *arak* or talisman that is deposited in the *arakwala* or "arak-hole" in the threshing-floor. I believe there may be other versions of some parts of the song, as I have heard verses sung in which Gaṇa deviyo (Gaṇeśa) and, I think, other gods were also invoked. It is

¹ See especially—

H. C. P. Bell, "Sinhalese Customs and Ceremonies connected with Paddy Cultivation in the Low-Country," *Journal, C.B.R.A.S.*, vol. VIII., No. 26, 1883, pp. 44-93.

H. C. P. Bell, "Paddy Cultivation Ceremonies in the Four Kóralés. Kégalla District," *ib.*, vol. XI., No. 39, 1889, pp. 17-21.

And also—

R. W. Ievers, "Customs and Ceremonies connected with Paddy Cultivation," *ib.*, vol. VI., No. 21, 1880, pp. 46-52.

J. P. Lewis, "Tamil Customs and Ceremonies connected with Paddy Cultivation in the Jaffna District," *ib.*, vol. VIII., No. 29, 1884, pp. 304-333.

J. P. Lewis, "The Language of the Threshing-floor," *ib.*, vol. VIII., No. 29, 1884, pp. 237-270.

C. J. R. Le Mesurier, "Customs and Superstitions connected with the Cultivation of Rice in the Southern Province of Ceylon," *Journal, R.A.S.*, Great Britain, vol. XVII. (N.S.), 1885, pp. 366-372.

H. C. P. Bell, "Superstitious Ceremonies connected with the Cultivation of Al-wi or Hill Paddy," *Orientalist*, vol. III., 1888-1889, pp. 99-103.

H. Nevill, "An early Arak-gala or Threshing-floor Charm," *Taprobanian*, vol. II., Part IV., 1887, p. 97.

by no means generally well known, and often only a few verses can be sung. It is chanted line by line by some old man who knows it well, and repeated after him in chorus by the men at work, while the paddy is being trodden out. The effect of the whole scene on a bright moonlight night is very impressive. It is difficult to set down the notes on which the words are intoned or chanted, as unless a man is a good singer he does not keep constantly to the same air; and the members of the chorus often sing together in several different keys at once. Nevertheless the effect is good. The following is, with many variations, one of the airs to which the words are sung:—



Muduné ya - na gon ra - ju - né

There are a number of euphemistic terms of the usual character employed, *e.g.*, ලියකඩා, to cut. There are also many technical agricultural terms. The song must be a very ancient one, and is handed down by word of mouth; so far as I know it has never yet been printed.

I give also seven charms that are used to protect the grain from various injuries or to promote its general growth. One of the charms (No. 8) is referred to in verse 5 of the *kamat-hélla*.

Finally there is briefly described a "fire-walking ceremony," intended to promote the general welfare of the village as well as the abundance of crops. This is, however, less directly connected with the cultivation.

The words of the *kamat-hélla* are given, with some corrections in spelling,* as written down for me by an old man at Niriella, about five miles from Ratnapura, this year. It is sung while threshing is going on, but not, of course continuously the whole time. At the conclusion all the cultivators shout *ándu ándu* (?) and *heri heri*.

* For these I am indebted to Mudaliyár J. D. Abegoonewardene and Mudaliyár A. Mendis Gunasekara.

කමත් හැල්ල.¹

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. බුබං සරණයද බ | ලේ |
| බමං සරණයද බ | ලේ |
| සබ්බං සරණයද බ | ලේ |
| මෙතුන් සරණ කමත බ | ලේ |
| 2. ඉරිදෙවියෝ වැඩිය නැ | හේ |
| බොල් පිණි නොතිබෙයි එනැ | හේ |
| සද දෙවියෝ වැඩිය නැ | හේ |
| කරුවල නොතිබෙයි එනැ | හේ |
| 3. මහ ගරතුන් බැන්ද නැ | හේ |
| කණුවල් නොතිබෙයි එනැ | හේ |
| සැම ² දෙවියෝ වැඩිය නැ | හේ |
| උවුරු නොතිබෙයි එනැ | හේ |
| 4. වී සහ බිජු වසුළු කල | ව |
| හීරන්ද්‍ර වෙහ නරම | ව |
| දිය බදිමින් හිසි නරම | ව |
| හීන් බණ්ඩි වෙහ ගොයම | ව |
| 5. දියබදිමින් නියර උස | ව |
| කිරිදිය කිරිවදින කල | ව ³ |
| කරල් නැමි නැගෙන ඉර | ව |
| ගොයම පැසි තිබෙන කල | ව |
| 6. නැකත් බලා ⁴ ගොයම ලී | යා ⁵ |
| කමතට හිසි බිමක් සො | යා |
| නැකත් බලා කමත ලී | යා |
| කමත වටව වැල් දැද | යා ⁷ |
| 7. කමතක් සැහැ කවය ලෙස | ව |
| කැව කර කැවකද ⁸ එක්කො | ව |
| වටව වටව ⁹ එක්කො | ව |
| කමත සුද්දකර ¹⁰ විසෙ | ව |

¹ හැල්ල *hélla* (from හැල්ල *sélla*, a contraction of සැහැල්ල *sehella*).

² Perhaps *Saman deviyó* is meant, but as it stands [in the MS. ගම; but ග is not a letter belonging to pure Eḷu in which poetry was written, although it is not infrequently found in Kandyan MSS.] the words mean "all the gods." I have heard other words sung in which *Gaṇa deviyó* was also mentioned.

³ "Having offered milk." This refers to a *kema* or charm, for an account of which see below, No. 6.

⁴ "At the milk-entering time," *i.e.*, when the young grains are becoming filled with soft milky endosperm before the grain sets.

⁵ The auspicious hour may be determined by a regular astrologer or by an ordinary cultivator acquainted with astrology. For further particulars see H. C. P. Bell, *Journal, C.B.R.A.S.*, vol. VIII., No. 26, p. 78.

Threshing-floor Song.

1. The strength of refuge in Buddha,
The strength of refuge in Dharmma,
The strength of refuge in the Sangha—
In these three refuges is the strength of the threshing floor :
2. Where the sun god appears
There will remain no dew drops,
Where the moon god appears
There will remain no darkness,
3. Where the great tuskers are tied up
There will remain no tree stumps,
Where all the gods appear
There will be no mishaps,
4. At the time of sowing paddy and seed paddy,
When it waxes parrot green,
Turning in the water to the right degree—
When the seed is just maturing in the ear,
5. Turning in the water to the level of the balk,
And having offered milk at the milk-entering time,
The ears bending towards the East—
At the time the paddy ripens,
6. Having found out a good hour and reaped the paddy,
Having chosen a good place for the threshing-floor,
Having found out a good hour and weeded it,
And drawn creepers round the floor,
7. Having in a circle scraped the threshing-floor,
Having made and put the sheaves together into *keṭakandu*,
And gathered into *waṭamaḷu* all around,
And having purified the threshing-floor,

⁶ ලීන, reaped ; this word is used euphemistically to avoid the harsher term කපා, cut.

⁷ Cf. J. P. Lewis, Journal, C.B.R.A.S., vol. VIII., p. 312 ; and H. C. P. Bell, *ib.*, vol. VIII., p. 48, for references to a "guard cord." Such do not appear to be actually used.

⁸ "And put together into *keṭakandu*," i.e., arranged the sheaves in cocks previous to stacking in regular *waṭamaḷu*.

⁹ *Waṭamaḷu*. These are the stacks in which the paddy is arranged ready for threshing. They are ring-shaped, with a central space big enough for a man to stand in ; the paddy is arranged with the ears pointing inwards.

¹⁰ "Purified." This refers to cow-dunging the floor and sprinkling it with "milk" made of sandalwood ground with cocoanut milk.

8. කමත මැදින් අරක් වළ
ඒමැද්දේ ගොන්කණුව
කණුවේ අග පුවත් මල
ගොන් කණුවට ගලබඩුව
ක්¹
ක්²
ක්³
ක්³
9. දවට පිළිල⁴ හරිකරගෙ
දෙති පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
හුග පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
බුලත් පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
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10. දෙබම් පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
ඉරික් පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
ගොයම් පිළිල හරිකරගෙ
පිළිල හතම හරිකරගෙ
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ආ
11. අරක් බෙල්ලා⁵ හරිකරගෙ
රබ්බඩ ගෙඩි හතක් රුගෙ
කදුරු⁶ කොළද හරිකරගෙ
වරකා ගැටයක්⁷ ඇරගෙ
ආ
ආ
ආ
ආ
12. මිඟෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
නයිඟෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
එළුඟෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
අස්ඟෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
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ආ

¹ The *arak* is a talisman protecting the threshing-floor from charms or any misfortunes ; its theoretical ingredients are detailed in verses 9 to 16. In practice most of these are omitted ; the arecanuts, the sickle, the *arak-bellā*, and the ears of paddy at least are used, and often some other of the more easily obtained objects, such as the *kaduru* leaves, young jak fruit, the metals and gems, and also a *gon-góre* if there is one to be had, which is often not the case.

² *Gonkanuwa*, the bull post, is an areca tree planted firmly in the centre of the floor, and to which the bulls are fastened while they are driven round it in a circle.

³ *Galaṭṭuwa* (the correct form would be ගැලැටුව *gelaṭuwa*, from Sinhalese ගැල, a pair or team of oxen, and connected with Tamil ஒட்டிவத, to drive). This is the jungle rope by which the bulls are fastened to the bull post ; at one end is a loop passing round the post ; the other end is fastened to the rope by which the bulls are yoked together. The number of bulls used varies from four to twelve, the latter being the full complement ; they are yoked in two sets of six each, and

8. (Having made) in the middle of the threshing-floor an arak-hole,
(And set up) a bull post in the middle of it,
And on its end a *puwak* flower,
(And round) for the bull post a *galaoṭṭuwa*,
9. Having got some *dawata pilila*,
Having got some *dehi pilila*,
Having got some *nuga pilila*,
Having got some *bulat pilila*,
10. Having got some *dodam pilila*,
Having got some *iluk pilila*,
Having got some *goyam pilila*,
Having got these seven *pilila*,
11. Having got the *arak bellá*,
Having brought seven red ripe arecanuts,
And also seven leaves of *kaduru*,
Having brought a very young *waraká* jak fruit,
12. Having got as well the *górē* of a buffalo,
And also having got the *górē* of a cobra,
And also having got the *górē* of a goat,
And also having got the *górē* of a horse,

follow each other round the post trampling out the corn. They are driven by boys, who catch what is voided in the basal leaf sheaths of the areca palm and throw it away from the floor.

⁴ *Pilila*, i.e., *Loranthus*, a parasite resembling honeysuckle, common on many trees in Ceylon; the trees mentioned are *dawata* (*Carallia integririma* DC.), *dehi* (lime), *nuga* (*Ficus altissima*, Bl. var. *laccifera* Roxb.), *bulat* (betel) *dodam* (orange); but I do not know what the *pilila* of *iluk* (*Imperata arundinacea*, Cyr.) or paddy can be. *Iluk* leaves are, however, put into the *arakwala*, perhaps as a substitute.

⁵ The *arak-bellá* is a seven-fingered *aporrhais*-like marine shell, placed with the *arak* in the *arakwala*, apparently corresponding to the *mutta* of Mr. Bell, Journal, C.B.R.A.S., vol. VIII., p. 49.

⁶ *Kaduru*, *Tabernaemontana dichotoma*, Roxb.

⁷ There are two kinds of jak fruit, *waraká* and *wela*; the former, being firm textured and of a golden colour, is preferable to the latter, which is soft.

13. ඇත්ගෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
ගොන්ගෝරෙන්¹ හරිකරගෙ
මුළුගෝරෙන් හරිකරගෙ
ගෝරහනම හරිකරගෙ
14. රිදි රත්තරන් ඇරගෙ
තඹ පිත්තල සපයාගෙ
ලෝකඩ වානේ ඇරගෙ
යකඩෙන් දූකැත්තක් ගෙ
15. රත්ත ජනි හැකිපමණි
මුතු ඇටයක් සුරකිව ගෙ
පබළුන් සපයා ඇරගෙ
මෙති සැමදේ ඇරගෙ
16. නැකත් බලා අරක් ති
අරක් වළේ බැතක්² ති
ජව ලඬින් ගොයම්³ ති
මෙති ලෙසට නිවැරදි
17. හරක් ගෙණත් කමත තුළ
බාන් වැලක්⁴ රුගෙණ අත
ගලතාලා නිසි හැටිය
දෙවියන් සිහිකරගෙ සි
18. මුදුනේ යන ගොන් රජු
ජලය යන වේරිය
කලාන යන නාමිබ
මඩවදමි විගෙසි
19. අං දෙකරන් ගාව
කන්දෙක මුතු අමුන
හුණරේ⁶ මුතු අමුන
මෙති ලෙසට සරස

¹ The *górē* of a bull; some bulls have a habit of licking their bodies and so hair gets on the tongue and ultimately finds its way to the stomach and forms there a matted ball. Such bulls are said to be unable to bellow, or at least not to do so properly. The ball of hair may be emitted from the mouth, and is called *górē*; one that I obtained was about two inches in diameter. The *góra* of the other hairy animals mentioned must be analogous. The cobra's *górē* may possibly refer to the stone or gem which is said to be put out of the mouth and to provide a light, within the

sickle, conch, scraper (*póruwa*), billhook (*keti*), and two brooms (*pamba kossa* and *idala kossa*).

Subsequently four *goyiyo* recite the following charm as they walk three times round the floor. Two *goyiyo* take *deti* (pitchforks) and lay them across the backs of their necks and hook their elbows in them; a third man does the same, but with straw hanging from the ends of the *deti*. The fourth man carries a goad for driving bulls. The words recited are as follows:—

රන් දැනි රිදි දැනි ගැට දෙමට නික පිල වර දැනි පසක් ගෙණින් දැනි පසක්ගෙණ පිලේ මෙගල් බොඩ ගබ්බා කර්ද කර වැසි වස්සා මේ කමතට අරගන් ගොසියෝ. මැදුනු කොළ ගණිනි, නෙව්දුනු කොළ සලාලනි. මේ කමතට අරගන් ගොසියෝ වැඩ කරනි, දෙසියෝ බලාසිටිනි. අණ්ඩු, අණ්ඩු.

Gold *deti*, silver *deti*, *geṭa demaṭa*, *nika*, *pila*, *warā deti*,¹ of those, five *deti* taking, (and) of these, five *deti* taking, that *galboḍa* this *galboḍa*² crying, black daughter, black calf and heifer, *goyiyo* that guard this floor. They take well-threshed paddy, they toss the unthreshed paddy and let the grain fall. *Goyiyo* that guard this floor are working, the gods keep watch. Peace, peace!

This is an interesting variant of the formula given by Mr. Bell (Journal, C.B.R.A.S., vol. VIII., p. 50).

Another use of ashes.—After the corn is all threshed and the straw removed, in the night, it is left on the threshing-floor, occupying the centre of it, and is protected by a single continuous ring of ashes round it.

Winnowing.—After threshing is completed a tall bamboo is set up close to the *gonkaṇuwa* and cross bars erected at a convenient height, and over the top *cadjans* to keep off the sun; this erection is called වි හුලාගේ අරින කතිරේ, *wi hulangé ariṇa katiré*; the winnower climbs up on to the cross bars and takes the paddy in a *kulla* and gently sifts it over the edge, so that the grains of paddy fall just below him while the chaff is blown away by a slight breeze.

¹ *Pila*, *Tephrosia purpurea*, Pers.; *Warā*, *Calotropis gigantea*; *geṭa demaṭa*, *Gmelina asiatica*. The other trees not certain.

² *Galboḍa*, rocky ridge or line of rocks.

Threshing by men.—Even in the same field part of the paddy may be threshed by buffaloes and other part by men; the latter being too poor to possess buffaloes and unwilling to give a share of paddy due for their hire.

Charms.

The following charms are used to avert various disasters, or merely to promote the general growth of the crop:—

(1) *If the young paddy plants die off.*—A plantain tree is set up in the middle of the field and decorated with young cocoanut leaves and areca flowers and two lighted torches, one on each side of the tree. The *kattadiyā* must enter the field from the east side, and after completing the charm leave it on the west. A little fowl's blood in a leaf cup (*goṭuwa*) is placed on each side of the entrance. The *kattadiyā* must wear a clean cloth and go to and from the field alone without speaking; this applies to all the charms here described.

(2) *If the plants are eaten by rats.*—A *taṭuwa*¹ is prepared and five kinds of flowers offered on it and a lighted buffalo-ghee lamp placed on it. A thread spun by a virgin is taken and knotted seven times, and the following charm repeated seven times for each knot, after which the charmed thread is burned in the field and left there.

සිංහි. ගුන්තිලානන් ප්‍රසිද්ධානන් කරුණන්ගේ නායාන්තු: සුර ගුරුභි නම: නම: සිංහි. නලො කවිටන් විවිටං අරිවිටන් පෝ පෝ ස්වාමියානේ පො: සිංහි. රෙහැර අරුණන්තං නමාමි නම.

Om! holy! Guttīla² rats quarrels destroy: Gurūḷu god hail! hail! hail to Om! I will tie you, I will kill you, begone! begone! Oh god, begone! Om! I bow before the "sin-destroyer's" (Buddha's) foot, hail!

Of this, the first part is Sanskrit, the middle Tamil, and the end Sinhalese.

(3) *If the ears die off at the time of flowering.*—Place on the *taṭuwa* (*lit.* මල්වුලන් පටුවක්, flower betel shelf) seven betel leaves, seven lamp wicks, seven leaf cups of milk

¹ *I.e.*, a small decorated platform or shelf of young cocoanut leaves, &c., supported on four sticks, such as is commonly used in devil ceremonies.

² *Mūsila* was Guttīla Bodisat's rival; *mūsika* is a rat; taking advantage of this resemblance in the words, the charmer prays Guttīla to treat the rats as he did *Mūsila*.

(කිරිබෝව); then whistling (හුරුවන්නර) thrice proceed northwards, and when near the boundary of the field clap the hands behind the back three times and spend that night only in a place where there are no other persons.

(4) *If white ants eat the roots.*—Take a handful of sand from an untrodden place and repeat the charm මං මං බහිරව වඩන පුලුස්සනු නම (‘‘Om! holy! Bahirawa—burst up, hail!’’) a hundred and eight times over a little sand and throw it away in the field.

(5) *If the plants are sucked by flies* (මැස්සා බොනවා).—Place four lime thorns in the four corners of the field; put five lime sticks in the middle of the field, and taking a little king cocoanut oil repeat the charm මං මුනි මහාමුනි ආබුද්ධිමාල තෙරුන් ආණ්ඩු මෙහි ආප කැප හැර මිඩු මිඩු නම (‘‘Om Muni! great Muni, by the order of Aṅgulimāla Thera¹ relinquish your rights here, run! run! hail!’’) nine times over a little of the oil, then light a lamp and go away.

(6) *කිරිකෙම, Kirikema*, to promote the flow of milky sap into the young grains at the ‘‘milk-entering time’’ (කිරි වදින කලට).

Take a forked *rukattana*² stick (රුක්කන්තන බලවිටක්³) and decorate it with young cocoanut leaves and areca flowers; on Saturday evening clear a place near a jak tree, sprinkling sandalwood milk-water (හදුං කිරි පැන්), and make an enclosure with young cocoanut leaves ready for the ceremony; next day go before the crow caws (කපුටා අඬන්නට පළමු), and taking a little milk from the jak tree put it ‘‘in a leaf cup’’ (බෝවුමකට); into the same vessel put milk of *kaduru*,⁴ *daluk*, cocoanut, and *del*; then taking these five sorts of milk and a little *kalu-duru*, *sudu-duru* (spices), *sudu-linnu*

¹ Aṅgulimāla Thera.—In the Aṅgulimāla Sūtra, Aṅgulimāla was a man who killed 999 persons and made a garland of their fingers (whence his name). He was converted by Buddha, and became a priest and attained Nirvāṇa.

² *Rukattana*, *Alstonia scholaris*, Brown.

³ *Balaṭṭa* = *balatṭa*, a prop; cf. *galatṭa* in verse 8 of the *kamat-hēlla*.

⁴ *Kaduru*, *Tabernaemontana dichotoma*, Roxb.; *daluk*, *Euphorbia antiquorum*, L.; *del*, *Artocarpus nobilis*, Thw.

(garlic), *perunkāyan* (assafoetida), grind them together and put into a king cocoanut and take it to the field. Set up the *rukattana* stick; make with young cocoanut leaves five chains of five links each, and with them join the *rukattana* stick to five bamboo sticks set round about it. Then set the king cocoanut on the fork of the *rukattana* stick, and take three paddy plants from three sides and put the ears into the king cocoanut, and pour the five kinds of milk into it, and place seven *kaduru* leaves over it and tie *iluk*¹ leaves, and go away without speaking to a lonely place. Three days afterwards go to the field and untie the aforesaid ears and come away. Then the milk will enter (එවිට කිරි වදි). At the stile at the entrance to the field on either side of it fasten two young cocoanut-leaf chains of three links each. It is usual also to stick the king cocoanut on the fence.

This *kirikema* is the charm referred to in verse 5 of the *kamat-hēlla*; it is something like one described by Mr. Bell (*Orientalist*, loc. cit.) as being used at the same time and for the same purpose in connection with the cultivation of *el-wi*.

(7) *Charm against wild animals.*—Write the following antra on an ola and put it at the fence where they come in:—

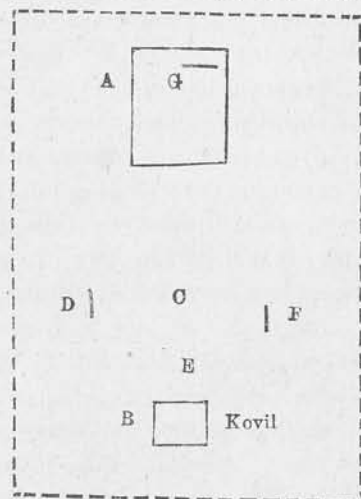
මං	මං	මං	මං	මං
මං	මං	මං	මං	මං
මං	මං	මං	මං	මං
මං	මං	මං	මං	මං

¹ *Iluk*, *Imperata arundinacea*, Cyr.

The last ceremony which I describe is of a different character, and less directly connected with cultivation. It is of special interest on account of the fire-walking, which, I believe, has never been previously recorded as Sinhalese.

Ginimaduwa, or fire-walking (ගිනිමඩුව).

I witnessed the performance of this at Niriella in March of this year. It is performed at irregular intervals (four or five years) with the general object of ensuring health and prosperity for the village and abundant crops. The expenses are borne by general subscription. A large rectangular area is railed in with young cocoanut-leaf fencing on a dry field. Inside this two temporary houses are erected, and three separate unroofed altars called *toran*; the larger



building (A) covers a fourth *torana* (G), that of Pattini deviyó; the others are dedicated to Kataragam deviyó (D), Dewol deviyó (E), and Wáhaladeviyó (F). These altars are beautifully decorated with cut-out patterns in young cocoanut leaf laid on a back ground of බෙරුෆ් *habarala* (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*, Schott) leaf.

The proceedings are in charge of a *kapurála*, who brings the *ábarana* of Pattini deviyó with him from the *déwálé*. Before dark a number of *milla* (*Vitex altissima*) logs are brought in procession, ready for the fire.

The ritual begins at about eight. The *ábarana* are kept in the smaller building (*kóvil*), which is an upstairs building on a small scale. The *kapurála* is in the top storey, and the *ábarana* are wound up in a great turban and arranged on his head. The largest of the three elephants available was brought alongside, and the *kapurála* with some difficulty climbed on to its back without upsetting the erection on his head. A procession of three elephants, tom-tom beaters, dancers, and boys with lighted candles then proceeded round the field outside the enclosure. On returning, the *kapurála* dismounted outside the larger building, and very slowly and solemnly conveyed the *ábarana* (which was kept in round lac-painted boxes) to the Pattini *torana* within. Each elephant was made to kneel towards the altar before being led away.

There were eight dancers, wearing coats and skirts with good *appliqué* decoration (two of the coats were embroidered with cobras), and also belts, turbans, and bell-covered leggings. The operation of dressing was very casually performed in public, and several were not ready until the ceremony had begun some time. The remainder of the night was occupied with songs and offerings (betel), &c., made to the *ábarana*, and dances both under cover and outside. The fire dance with *dumma* dust was very well done, an interesting and beautiful variation being seen when the men stooped opposite each other and threw fire over each other's heads. These fire dances on a dark night are really splendid. The men also repeatedly extinguished the burning torches in their mouths.

Towards morning a fire is lit and burns down to red hot glowing ashes, which are arranged in a circle about a yard in diameter; the ashes are about 6 in. thick in the middle and 1 in. at the edge. The heat is tested from time to time by laying a spray of areca flower on the ashes. Presently the chief *kapurála* present (in this case a man who had arrived unexpectedly, and not the officiating *kapurála*) jumps first on the red hot ashes two or three times, and finally all the dancers and the *kapurála* do so until they are extinguished.

The chief *kapurála* above-mentioned alone seemed as if he felt pain, but no one seemed the worse after the performance was over; even the chief *kapurála* set off at once, carrying a heavy load and walked seven miles without inconvenience. Afterwards a *kalagediya* of water, its mouth tied over with a leaf, is inverted in the ashes, and after the *kapurála* has attended to the altars and packed up the *ábaraṇa* the ceremony is over at about 7 A.M.

So far as I am aware no treatment was given to the fire-walkers' feet beforehand; however, this could have been done, as I did not watch the proceedings right through. The dancers themselves state that they are protected by *man-trams*; it is, however, more or less generally supposed that some sort of "medicine" is used. Iron smelters in a similar way have a custom of jumping on the red hot iron when it is made; this was done before Mr. im Thurn a few years ago at Balangoda. I must say the fire-walking was not a very alarming performance, and it seemed to be possible that well hardened feet would not in any case suffer much by it. Several of the men started off immediately for a ceremony in another village. I regret that I am unable to give a more detailed and particular account of the whole performance, with the words of the songs.

In conclusion, I wish to thank Mr. J. D. Abegoonewardene, Court Mudaliyár at Ratnapura, for his invaluable help in Englishing the Sinhalese. One other point I should like to say a word about, viz., that all of the eight Papers referred to above as dealing with the present subject have been written by foreigners, for whom such investigations must always be difficult and laborious. It is surprising that no Ceylonese has cared to take up these studies, and publish some account of the many interesting customs which are now dying out in the more civilized districts. The collection of agricultural, religious, and other songs, with the airs to which they are sung, is particularly needed; if their study is too long neglected, they will be sought in vain when interest in such matters is at last awakened, as is bound to happen sooner or later.